

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

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## At G20 Summit, President Obama Reached Out to Asian Leaders

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer

Washington — Five of the six private talks President Obama held on the sidelines of the Group of 20 (G20) Toronto Summit were with leaders from Asian nations, underscoring the significance of U.S. engagement in the region, White House officials say.

At a background briefing before the economic coordination meetings in Canada, White House advisers said these face-to-face meetings were “an eloquent demonstration of the importance that the president attaches to Asia” and the importance of Asia to U.S. political, security and economic interests.

Obama told reporters at a press conference June 27 following the G20 meetings that Asia is growing rapidly, and through meetings like the G20 and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum he plans to attend in Japan in November and in other multilateral institutions, the United States is pursuing a deeper and more comprehensive partnership.

“We are going to be a presence in the Pacific because we are a Pacific nation as well as an Atlantic nation,” Obama said. “But we want to partner with all countries to create an environment in which trade and commerce and the exchange of goods and people and ideas and cultures is thriving.”

During two days at the Toronto summit, Obama met with South Korean President Lee Myung-bak, Chinese President Hu Jintao, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan. He also held an individual meeting with British Prime Minister David Cameron at the summit.

White House advisers said U.S. policy in East Asia is focused on three major elements: U.S.-Asian alliances, relations with China and relations with the countries of Southeast Asia.

Obama assured South Korean President Lee that he will present the proposed U.S.-South Korea Free Trade Agreement to Congress for its consideration and approval. “I want to make sure that everything is lined up properly by the time that I visit Korea in November,” Obama said. South Korea hosts the next meeting of the G20 in Seoul, November 11-12.

The president said the Korean trade agreement, which was first introduced in Congress in 2007 but has not won

approval, will create jobs for the United States and South Korea, and will also enhance America’s competitiveness in the 21st century.

“It is the right thing to do for our country. It is the right thing to do for Korea,” Obama said. “It will strengthen our commercial ties and create enormous potential economic benefits and create jobs here in the United States, which is my Number 1 priority.”

In his meeting with Chinese President Hu, Obama stressed the cooperation the two nations have maintained despite challenges from the nuclear ambitions of North Korea and Iran and the global economic recovery that is still fragile. Obama said the two leaders also addressed issues regarding China’s currency revaluation.

“China has determined that it is in its own interests, its own sovereign interests, to move back [toward] a path of flexible exchange rates. We think that is a very positive thing,” Obama told reporters. He added that it will be a gradual and prudent revaluation to avoid a disruption to the Chinese economy.

Hu told reporters at a joint press conference with Obama in Toronto that China wants to work with the United States to maintain the high-level exchanges and interactions that will deepen “our practical cooperation across the board.”

“We also want to ... continue to move forward the positive, cooperative and comprehensive China-U.S. relationship,” Hu said.

The United States and China recently completed the second round of their strategic and economic dialogue and a first round of the human rights dialogue. More are planned, including a meeting by Defense Secretary Robert Gates with Chinese defense officials in Beijing, Obama said.

### JAPAN AND INDIA MEETINGS

Obama also met with Japanese Prime Minister Kan. Japan’s ruling Democratic Party selected Kan, the former finance minister, as its new leader June 3.

“We discussed very pressing security issues, in particular North Korea, the sinking of the [South Korean naval vessel] Cheonan, and the importance of both our countries standing in solidarity with South Korea and the entire international community ... in condemning the incident and making sure that North Korea gets a clear signal that such provocations are unacceptable,” Obama said at a press conference with Kan. “I also expressed appreciation to Japan for its support for the Iran sanctions that we passed through the United Nations Security

Council, and we discussed issues of implementation.”

The United States and Japan recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of their security alliance, which has served as a cornerstone of Northeast Asian security and fostered prosperity throughout Asia. Obama will attend the November APEC meeting in Japan.

The president also held a private meeting with Indian Prime Minister Singh to discuss regional economic and security issues, as he had done with the other Asian leaders, but also to discuss broader issues such as climate change and energy security. Obama travels to India later this year.

Obama and Singh launched a strategic partnership when Singh was in Washington in November 2009 that has brought together senior U.S. and Indian government officials and business leaders.

### **Statement on Gulf Oil Spill: International Offers of Assistance**

*United States to accept 22 offers of assistance from 12 countries*

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Office of the Spokesman  
June 29, 2010

Media Note

Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill: International Offers of Assistance

The National Incident Command and the Federal On Scene Coordinator have determined that there is a resource need for boom and skimmers that can be met by offers of assistance from foreign governments and international bodies.

The United States will accept 22 offers of assistance from 12 countries and international bodies, including two high speed skimmers and fire containment boom from Japan. We are currently working out the particular modalities of delivering the offered assistance. Further details will be forthcoming once these arrangements are complete.

The Unified Area Command (UAC) under the direction of the Coast Guard, is coordinating the oil spill response in the Gulf. It includes representatives of the responsible parties, affected states and other Departments and agencies of the U.S. Government. The National Incident Command (NIC), headed by the U.S. Coast Guard, is working with the Department of State to support the UAC as it sources equipment, supplies and expertise.

The 27 countries which have offered the U.S. Government assistance are: the Governments of Belgium, Canada,

China, Croatia, Denmark, El Salvador, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and Vietnam.

The international bodies offering assistance are: the European Maritime Safety Agency, the European Commission's Monitoring and Information Centre, the International Maritime Organization, and the Environment Unit of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Environment Program.

The Department has released a chart of offers of assistance that the U.S. has received from other governments and international bodies. The chart is updated as necessary to include any additional offers of assistance and decisions on accepting the offers. The chart is posted on the State Department Web site at: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/143488.pdf>

Questions on the details of offers of assistance, and any additional discussions between other countries and BP, should be directed to the Unified Area Command. The UAC Joint Information Center phone numbers are 713-323-1670 or 713-323-1671. (Note: These are new phone numbers.)

### **Democracy Makes Unprecedented Gains in Latin America**

*State's Valenzuela cites long consolidation of democratic process*

By Jim Fisher-Thompson  
Staff Writer

Washington — U.S. diplomat Arturo Valenzuela believes Latin America is experiencing a wave of democratic governance unparalleled in its turbulent history.

“If you go back and look at the long sweep [of history] at a continent that was founded, as was this country, on the basis of the ideals of the Enlightenment ... it was very hard to consolidate” the democratic process in Latin America, said Valenzuela, who is assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere affairs.

But now, he said, democracy is making progress throughout the region. Latin America is expanding its political and economic engagement internally and abroad, he said, and relations with the United States are improving through the Obama administration's focus on engagement through partnerships.

Valenzuela, who served in the Clinton administration and has been a professor at Georgetown University, spoke to a

gathering of scholars and specialists at the Brookings Institution in Washington June 29. The event was co-sponsored by the Corporación Andina de Fomento (CAF), a multibillion-dollar lending institution in Latin America.

Democratic penetration in the continent expanded after the 1980s, Valenzuela said, as evidenced by the diminishing number of military coups. "Remember from 1930 to 1980, 40 percent of all changes in Latin American governments were through coup d'états," he said.

Despite periodic political and economic ups and downs, "This is the longest period in the entire history of the Americas ... of continuous constitutional rule. We are in a very good time now," he said.

The steady "consolidation of constitutional continuity and democratic governance" is important not only to the region's citizens, Valenzuela said, but also for relations with the United States, because democracy and respect for human rights are critical foundations on which successful U.S.-Latin American relations are built.

Ambassador Craig Kelly, principal deputy assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere affairs, agreed that democracy was gaining in the region. "We are not in the same place we were in the 1980s," Kelly said.

Kelly, a career diplomat who was U.S. envoy to Chile from 2004 to 2007, said Latin American countries have made enormous strides politically and economically in the past 30 years, helped by "policy changes of their own."

President Obama's administration has made it clear, he said, that "we want to address these issues in a spirit of partnership ... [which] really is the defining principle of our engagement with the region."

"Too often," Kelly said, "people have judged U.S. policy in the region by using the wrong preposition: What have you done 'for' Latin America and the Caribbean? And we want to answer that question explaining what we're doing 'with' Latin America and the Caribbean."

Kelly said the U.S. government has provided \$2 billion a year in assistance to Latin America, but stressed, "We're trying to focus it on facilitating positive policy changes on the part of the governments. If we want to see significant, positive change in the region, this is going to occur after the governments themselves undertake sound policy decisions."

For example, he said, Chile from 1990 to 2006 reduced its poverty rate by 44 percent to under 14 percent "largely through its own policy changes — opening up to the rest of the world, free trade agreements, implementing sound

social safety-net programs, education and many other things. It was not done primarily through international assistance."

With U.S.-Latin American trade at \$650 billion a year and remittances from Latin Americans living and working in the United States another \$60 billion a year, the State Department's challenge, Kelly said, is to "step back and think about how our diplomacy could leverage that overall [economic] engagement."

One such initiative, Kelly said, is the Pathways to Prosperity in the Americas program, which works to more effectively implement agreements the United States has with trade partners in the region "to achieve our social inclusion, anti-poverty" objectives.

This means drawing more people into "the economic integration that is occurring not only within the region but with Asia, the United States and Europe as well," the diplomat said, and involves such things as customs reform, English language instruction, microfinance and legal reform.

This is not a traditional aid program, Kelly stressed. "It is basically a sharing of best practices and putting mutual pressure on ourselves to achieve changes, which up to now have been somewhat difficult ... like financial systems reform to help small and medium-sized businesses and people who remained marginalized — women entrepreneurs, indigenous populations, Afro-descendants and others who have not benefitted from world trade."

### **Quick Embrace of Technology Will Aid Africa's Development**

*Senior U.S. official pledges continued U.S. support*

By Charles W. Corey  
Staff Writer

Washington — Hailing the spirit of entrepreneurship across Africa, U.S. Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Judith McHale called on all Africans to quickly embrace changing technology and a host of transparent reforms that can aid economic growth across the continent. She pledged continued U.S. support for that effort.

Speaking in Uganda at the Verizon Symposium on Internet connectivity June 28, McHale said, "East Africa cannot afford to be on the sidelines. The potential here is enormous."

The June 28-29 symposium in Uganda was organized by U.S. telecom firm Verizon Communications and other partners to discuss the arrival of new broadband Internet access in East Africa. The connection will link it with the

rest of the world and thus stimulate educational opportunities and economic growth and development across the region.

Referring to a recent report that looked at the economic potential in African markets, McHale said, "Those opportunities can only be realized if you have a well-educated work force, if all of your citizens are participating in that economic opportunity."

McHale pledged to her audience of more than 120 government, business and educational representatives attending from Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi that the United States government is willing to help in that effort.

"There are many things we can do to work together ... (such as) connecting you with U.S. academic institutions that have already undertaken many of the programs" that are being attempted by African universities.

The under secretary cautioned her audience to take advantage of developments that have already taken place elsewhere. "You do not need to reinvent the wheel; there are a lot of lessons learned all over the world as people are looking at ways to bridge the gap to advance all of these initiatives much more rapidly."

"We want to help you do it, but at the end of the day this needs to be an initiative owned by the countries and people of East Africa," McHale said. "You are the ones best positioned to know what you need to do to achieve the objectives, what will really be appropriate for the communities in which your students live. The international community will follow your lead, but you need to provide the direction for us all. Only you can define your own paths."

McHale provided what she called "guiding principles" for Africa to consider as it improves Internet connectivity and communications.

"Based on my own experience here and based on my interactions with young people throughout this region," she told her audience, "I'm absolutely convinced if we provide the students of East Africa with the resources they need, deserve and will increasingly come to expect, there is simply no limit on what they can achieve."

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